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KIHEI FACILITIES PROJECT

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The office building before being acquired by NOAA and after renovation by the sanctuary's dedicated volunteers.

PROJECT LOCATION

Although the Hawaiian Islands Humpback Whale National Marine Sanctuary (HIHWNMS) itself covers an area of about 3626 square kilometers [1,400 square

miles] in the waters of the Main Hawaiian Islands, this project is located on a land-based parcel that houses the sanctuary's Maui headquarters. The headquarters are located at 726 South Kihei Road in Kihei, Maui, Hawai'i, on property owned by the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA). The NOS Kihei sanctuary property is located within TMK (2) 3-9-01:87 on Lot 2-2 and occupies 0.457 hectares [1.13 acres] or 4572.9 square meters [49,223 square feet]. The waters off the coast at this location are part of the sanctuary.

NATIONAL OCEAN SERVICE (NOS) KIHAI FACILITY BACKGROUND

The NOS Kihei sanctuary headquarters property was developed in 1940 for use by the U.S. Navy for classified activities. The first buildings consisted of the main three-story building and the garage (now storage building). In the mid-1950s a generator shed (now small storage shed) and electronics building (now Education Center) were added. In 1971 NOAA's National Environmental Satellite, Data and Information Services (NESDIS) Ionosphere Station was established on the site. The NESDIS project continued until 1994 when the facility was acquired by NOS from NOAA's National Geophysical Data Center in various degrees of disrepair and deferred maintenance.

The sanctuary is interested in developing and securing the utility of the site for current and future program needs. Since NOS's acquisition of the property, a combination of staff and community volunteers have addressed many of the deferred maintenance items and have made significant improvements to the facility. More recently, the sanctuary is concerned about the long-term needs for the facility (e.g., relieve existing overcrowding, additional staff, modern facility for conducting seminars and community outreach). As a result, NOS, and its parent organization NOAA, commissioned a simplified Facility Master Plan Report to determine the sanctuary's long-range requirements (i.e., ten-year horizon) for the facility. The recommendations from that report form the basis for the proposed action analyzed in the DEA.

NOS MISSION

The stated mission of NOS is: "To be the Nation's principal advocate for coastal and ocean stewardship through partnerships at all levels. To support and provide the science, information, management, and leadership necessary to balance the environmental and economic well-being of the Nation's coastal resources and communities" (NOS 1998).

SANCTUARY MISSION

The Hawaiian Islands Humpback Whale National Marine Sanctuary was Congressionally designated by the Hawaiian Islands National Marine Sanctuary Act

(HINMSA) on November 4, 1992 (Subtitle C of Public Law 102-587, the Oceans Act of 1992).

Section 2304 of the HINMSA identifies the sanctuary's purposes as follows:

- To protect humpback whales and their habitat within the sanctuary;
- To educate and interpret for the public the relationship of humpback whales and the Hawaiian Islands marine environment;
- To manage human uses of the sanctuary consistent with the Hawaiian Islands National Marine Sanctuary Act and the National Marine Sanctuary Act; and
- To provide for the identification of marine resources and ecosystems of national significance for possible inclusion in the sanctuary.

The mission of the sanctuary program is to protect the humpback whale and its habitat, through education, research, and interpretive enforcement. In practice, mission-related activities are carried out by sanctuary staff in offices on Maui (the headquarters), O'ahu, and Kaua'i. In addition, the State of Hawai'i works out of an office on O'ahu.

SANCTUARY VISION

The sanctuary works collaboratively to sustain a safe and healthy habitat for the North Pacific stock of humpback whales (koholā). As a community of ocean stewards, the sanctuary strives to achieve a balance of appropriate uses, inspired care taking, enlightened understanding, and effective education to ensure the continued presence of the koholā for future generations. The sanctuary endeavors to do this with harmony, hope, respect, and aloha o ke kai (love of the sea) (NMSP 2002).

PROPOSED ACTION

The proposed action is the implementation of the Facility Master Plan Report (API 2000), with some recent revisions, to better enable the sanctuary in meeting its long-term needs. The Facility Master Plan Report outlined the development of the site over a period of ten years in three separate phases—each with its own timeline. The most significant activity occurs in the initial phase with the construction of a new on-site multi-purpose building.

PROJECT NEED

The sanctuary maintains a headquarters on NOAA property in Kihei, Maui, Hawai'i. In addition, the sanctuary has site offices on the islands of O'ahu and Kaua'i. The presence of resident sanctuary staff on these islands has nurtured strong community-based networks of volunteers, partnerships, and support. The sanctuary's presence on the Big Island of Hawai'i has been maintained by staff from other islands, Big Island-based sanctuary Advisory Council members, and volunteers (NMSP 2002).

The Facility Master Plan Report for the sanctuary headquarters was completed in October 2000, and updated in September 2001 and May 2002 (API 2000, API 2001, API 2002). The Master Plan documented the current and projected facility needs for the Maui sanctuary offices—in terms of personnel, programs and activities, buildings, site conditions, and government regulations. The planning process resulted in a spatial program for a new multi-purpose building along with a phasing plan to implement other improvements (expansion and renovation) to the existing facilities. The Facility Master Plan Report includes three phases over a period of ten years. By stretching the development over this time period, the sanctuary will be able to meet and sustain the goals and objectives of the Hawaiian Islands Humpback Whale National Marine Sanctuary, including facility improvements.

The phases identified in the Facility Master Plan Report include Phase I: construction of a new multi-purpose building (Years 1-4); Phase II: renovation of main building (Years 5-8); and Phase III: site enhancements (Years 8-10). The first phase addresses the most immediate needs of the sanctuary, including the construction of a new multi-purpose building to help meet the growing needs of the Education Program. Along with a large room that can accommodate 101 people (e.g., school groups, public lectures), the building will also include additional office space, storage space, and improved working conditions to address other facility deficiencies. Phase II was described as renovation of the main building to improve office/administrative space and create additional exhibit space. These renovations have been on-going, and will eventually involve relocation of administrative functions previously housed the main building to the new multi-purpose building and the addition of exhibits. Phase III details site enhancements aimed at unifying the new building and the renovated areas. With activities such as lectures, classroom sessions, and visitor orientation relocated to the multi-purpose building, the Education Center can become an exhibit and display oriented space. This phase includes the construction of an outdoor courtyard or gathering space in the area defined by buildings on three sides. Native landscaping, open space, and benches will encourage use as visitors circulate through the buildings and the site.

These long-range requirements (Phase I – Phase III of the Facility Master Plan Report) are supported by the sanctuary's Management Plan (NMSP 2002). The sanctuary's current Management Plan (NMSP 2002) identifies a need, as part of the Administration Action Plan (AD-5), to 'Augment the Physical Infrastructure of the sanctuary'. This strategy addresses Objective 6.2 of the Management Plan, to maintain and develop additional facilities and equipment. Implementation of Maui's ten-year facilities upgrade plan is an identified possible project. The Management Plan notes that building new or renovating existing facilities will be dependent upon NMSP appropriations and the sanctuary's annual budget allocation. The sanctuary headquarters recently received funding to pursue design and construction of the multi-purpose building identified in Scenario 2 of the Facilities Requirement Update Report (API 2002). The facility improvements described in the Master Plan are aimed at increasing the capabilities of the sanctuary to support its mission and vision (see Section 1.3) and conduct activities in its program areas (see Section 1.6).

SANCTUARY ACTIVITIES

The State of the sanctuary Report (NOAA 2001) assesses the sanctuary's performance in six key areas of activity, fundamental to the sanctuary's primary goal of resource protection. These areas include: Education and Outreach; Native Hawaiian Culture; Enforcement; Inter-Agency Cooperation; Social Impacts; and Research. Activity in each of these areas is conducted at the Maui sanctuary headquarters. The text in the following subsections has been reproduced from the sanctuary Management Plan (NMSP 2002) in order to provide a brief overview of sanctuary activities. The proposed action—implementation of the Facility Master Plan Report including renovation of existing facilities and construction of a new multi-purpose building on-site—is being pursued in direct support of the sanctuary activities.

Education and Outreach

The sanctuary uses education to promote ocean stewardship in the community. Since designation, it has developed many products and activities aimed at providing individuals with information necessary to make decisions that will effectively contribute to protecting humpback whales and their habitat in Hawaiian waters. sanctuary education emphasizes three main themes: 1) understanding humpback whale biology and behavior, and developing an appreciation for scientific and cultural perspectives that explain the history and significance of the humpback species; 2) awareness of the National Marine Sanctuary Program (NMSP) and its potential for providing the community with opportunities for taking action to increase marine conservation; and 3) understanding impacts resulting from human and natural causes on marine resources within the Hawaiian humpback whale habitat.

To further education, the sanctuary has cultivated its headquarters on Maui as a center where ideas on resource protection can be discussed and explored on an informal basis. Located on the beach in a popular tourist town, the headquarters is a scenic magnet for visitors from around the world. The sanctuary has enhanced the setting's natural assets by installing interpretive signage, cultivating a coastal garden of native Hawaiian plants, and facilitating shoreline observation of humpbacks during the winter season with a viewing deck and view scopes.

The headquarters has heightened the visibility of sanctuary programs and provided both a "living classroom" and a nexus for volunteers from the neighborhood community. In a joint undertaking of staff and volunteers, a sanctuary Education Center was designed and developed and became fully operational on the grounds of the headquarters in 1998. The center houses displays, videos, and books on the cultural and biological significance of the humpback whale and provides education in several aspects of the Hawaiian marine environment. The center is also a dissemination point for free brochures on NOAA and the NMSP. A core group of nearly 75 volunteers has undergone training and shares the duties of operating the center and providing informal docent services for visitors upon request.

In fiscal year 2001, more than 5,400 people visited the sanctuary headquarters, with the peak in visitor numbers occurring during the winter “whale season.” The ever-increasing flow of visitors prompted the hiring of a part-time employee to manage the sanctuary Education Center during regularly scheduled weekday hours. The center is also the location for a monthly lecture series, offering presentations by experts on themes relating to cultural and scientific perspectives on the humpback whales and marine research. The cordial atmosphere of sanctuary headquarters and the wide range of educational and entertaining activities it offers continue to rank as an unequivocal achievement that has enabled the sanctuary to establish its identity as a source of marine education in the community.

To assist in developing curricula on humpback whales within Hawai‘i’s schools, the sanctuary has fortified partnerships with several educational institutions and provided teaching tools for instruction in cetacean science and marine stewardship. Examples of productive collaborations include the sanctuary’s partnership with the Hawai‘i Department of Education’s interactive science television series, entitled Kidscience, the creation of positions for college interns under the University of Hawai‘i’s Marine Options Program, sponsorship of Careers on the Water Day with Farrington High School, and the installation of a permanent exhibit on humpback whale biology in the Kaua‘i Children’s Museum. In an effort to step up outreach throughout the Islands, the sanctuary staff has participated in many public events such as fairs that provide a venue for staff members to interact with diverse groups of people.

The sanctuary has also found it productive to establish key “signature” events where sanctuary education is clearly a focus of activity. The sanctuary Ocean Count last year also proved to be quite popular, enlisting the help of more than 1,000 volunteers to participate in an annual census of humpback whales from shoreline locations throughout the state. Both events have received significant levels of local and national news media coverage, commending the sanctuary for increasing yearly participation of a diverse island community in ocean education activities.

To enhance understanding of sanctuary goals and ensure greater participation in programs, the sanctuary has turned increasingly to news and entertainment media. The agency hired a Public Outreach Coordinator, who has secured coverage for the sanctuary in print and broadcast media and has enhanced the sanctuary’s relations with numerous writers and reporters. Other media-oriented informational projects include a 20-minute video segment about the sanctuary aired during incoming flights to Hawai‘i on Hawaiian Airlines; a brochure on the Maui sanctuary site; a general press kit; a public service announcement for television broadcast; and regular press releases on sanctuary events. In another very important move to engage and inform the public, the sanctuary, in consultation with NOAA, established a website with comprehensive news and information on resource protection, humpback whales, the Hawaiian habitat, research and development, and the history and future plans of the NMSP .

Native Hawaiian Culture

Ocean stewardship is deeply embedded in Native Hawaiian culture. Early Hawaiians developed techniques to manage their ocean resources without depleting them. The sanctuary has made it a goal to facilitate Native Hawaiian traditional uses of the humpback whale habitat which promise to bolster the primary goals of resource protection. Many of the traditional practices, handed down through generations, survive today. Others, however, were eclipsed at the end of the Hawaiian Kingdom and some even disappeared under the incursion of Western culture. A revival of Hawaiian oceanic traditions is currently underway as part of a broader movement of Hawaiian cultural revitalization. The sanctuary bolsters this movement by educating the public—Hawaiians and non-Hawaiians alike—about the relevance traditional marine practices have in today's world.

With the help of Native Hawaiian consultants including a sanctuary Advisory Council representative of Hawaiian affairs, the sanctuary took the step of researching customs that appear to have contributed to early Hawaiians' harmonious relationship with the ocean. This information includes the following themes: (1) early Hawaiian success with fishpond aquaculture; (2) Hawaiian invention of the ahupua'a, a system of social and political order based on watershed or mountain-to-shore management of natural resources; and (3) Hawaiian spiritual or religious reverence for several marine organisms as ancestral guardians known as 'aumakua. In order to take a more proactive role in highlighting the value of Native Hawaiian ocean stewardship, the sanctuary hired a Hawaiian Cultural Educator in 1999. This individual, a former sanctuary intern, made a major contribution to elucidating the cultural value of sanctuary resources in a paper and pamphlet on the Native Hawaiian significance of the humpback whale, identified in Hawaiian language as the koholā. A major achievement of the Hawaiian Cultural Educator consisted of synthesizing a large body of research into a brochure *The Cultural Importance of Whales in Hawai'i* and by incorporating the information in public lectures and a tabletop display created for use at community events such as educational fairs.

Further accomplishments underlining the sanctuary's commitment to preserving the traditional cultural value of natural resources include: 1) field presentations involving on-site cultural interpretation of marine resources within sanctuary boundaries; 2) establishment of partnerships with Native Hawaiian organizations in the community; 3) providing curriculum content for teaching Native Hawaiian perspectives on the humpback whale and marine stewardship; 4) incorporating Native Hawaiian protocols into sanctuary presentations; and 5) producing Native Hawaiian language translations of sanctuary educational materials.

Enforcement

Federal and State agencies have authority to enforce regulations arising from the Marine Mammal Protection Act and the Endangered Species Act, which list humpbacks as an endangered species and provide the animals with special legal protection. The sanctuary does not directly conduct enforcement activities, but it provides several forms of support for the agencies that do so on the sanctuary's behalf.

In a noteworthy measure, the sanctuary has for five years provided training, salary, and staff support for a NOAA enforcement officer, based at sanctuary headquarters for the duration of whale season. The officer receives and investigates complaints of possible instances of whale harassment. The sanctuary shares with NOAA Enforcement and other agencies an interest in maintaining enforcement of the Federal “approach regulation,” which requires that people stay at least 91 m [300 ft] away from humpback whales unless a humpback whale research permit has been obtained. The sanctuary has worked to reduce the likelihood that this regulation will be violated by cooperating in public education campaigns that describe the negative impacts to whales resulting from human pursuit and harassment. Toward this end, the sanctuary has jointly sponsored an annual Ocean Users Workshop on four islands and the publication of the Ocean Users’ Handbook and a regulation reference card for boaters. Additionally, the sanctuary has supported the National Marine Fisheries Service in their production of a local brochure for the Watchable Wildlife Campaign, which encourages observation of wildlife in a non-intrusive manner.

In another arena of enforcement, the sanctuary has fortified ties with agencies that have direct jurisdiction in preventing or remediating water quality and seabed degradation. These agencies include the United States Coast Guard, the Environmental Protection Agency, the Hawai‘i Division of Conservation and Resources Enforcement, and the Hawai‘i Department of Health.

Inter-Agency Cooperation

The more that is learned about the dynamic and interrelated nature of marine ecosystems, the greater the perceived need is to govern the ocean with a cooperative approach that minimizes the constraints of traditional sectoral boundaries of management responsibility and jurisdiction. The sanctuary implements a collaborative approach to management with the intent of increasing flexibility, mobilizing efficient use of limited staff resources, reducing duplicative services, and increasing opportunities for broad and effective citizen participation. In 1997, NOAA and the State of Hawai‘i signed an Intergovernmental Compact of Agreement establishing the framework for an administrative partnership. In accordance with the agreement, the sanctuary Federal manager routinely consults with the State co-manager, based in the Hawai‘i Department of Land and Natural Resources, in the implementation of comprehensive and coordinated management. The sanctuary has also made significant strides in constructing a collaborative management framework by increasing the role of the sanctuary Advisory Council (SAC). A sanctuary Advisory Coordinator has been hired to coordinate input and training for the 24-member body that represents diverse ocean interests in sanctuary management. Since 1997, the SAC has established subcommittees made up of members that bring technical expertise to the respective areas of research, education, and conservation—fundamental to the sanctuary’s primary mission in resource protection.

Social Impacts

The sanctuary assumes an important role in supporting multiple uses of coastal waters in the nation’s only Island State, where easy access to the ocean is as vital to the well-being of humans as conservation measures are to the continued recovery of

humpback whales. Transportation, tourism, commerce, culture, and recreation are inexorably tied to ocean use in Hawai'i. The sanctuary has taken steps to cultivate positive social and economic impacts in the community by monitoring negative and positive impacts of ongoing ocean uses and implementing education programs to help ocean users eliminate unacceptable behavior and thus increase their contribution to marine stewardship.

The sanctuary has implemented a policy of working closely with the whale-watch industry, which not only constitutes an obvious impact on the whale habitat but also comprises the fastest growing sector of Hawai'i's ocean industry. In one noteworthy move, the sanctuary supported a study on the economic impact of humpback whales in Hawai'i (NOAA 2000). The research estimated direct commercial revenues from the whale watching industry to be worth an annual amount of \$11 million. This information, made available to media, lawmakers, and the general public, underlined a positive material benefit of the whale-watch industry and gave credence to the concept that humpback recovery should be encouraged because it is, at minimum, an economic asset to the local community.

The economic success of the whale-watch industry has also prompted the sanctuary to institute precautionary measures that reduce the potential for increased whale-watch vessel traffic to hinder other ocean uses or cause harm to natural resources. Among these efforts, the sanctuary has done the following: (1) established a sanctuary Advisory Council position for a whale-watch industry representative; (2) designed the annual Ocean Users Workshop to target the needs of the whale-watch industry; and (3) implemented plans for a workshop that will identify ways to reduce collisions between whales and boats in coastal traffic.

The development of the sanctuary Volunteer Program ranks as another major achievement in community impact and social currency. The sanctuary has a staff Volunteer Coordinator who recruits and trains volunteers, apprising them of NOAA policies and sanctuary goals. It's estimated that a total of 4,500 hours of pro bono services have been donated to the sanctuary. A core of approximately 75 volunteers maintains regular weekly hours at the sanctuary, contributing in areas ranging from office chores to the design of educational displays. In anecdotal reports, volunteers credit the sanctuary for enriching their knowledge and interaction with the ocean. To put it another way, volunteerism at the sanctuary embodies a win-win situation and increases a desirable social impact of the sanctuary program.

Research

Though scientists have made great strides in understanding cetaceans in the last few decades, they are only beginning to effectively understand many aspects of humpback behavior and biology. The sanctuary makes a great effort to support the continuation of humpback research because it attempts to answer questions about the animal's recovery status and the need to maintain or redouble conservation efforts. The sanctuary's major contribution to research involves annual awards of grants to teams of scientists engaged in the study of Hawai'i's humpbacks. Between 1993 and 1998, the sanctuary has contributed funding that has helped in the completion of 22

humpback whale research projects in Hawaiian waters. The sanctuary also takes an active role in disseminating the findings of research projects to other agencies and to the general public. As a requirement for funding, the sanctuary asks researchers to produce a manuscript suitable for publication in a technical or peer review journal. In the effort to further the frontiers of cetacean science through the exchange of meaningful ideas, the sanctuary has assisted in planning efforts for a whale research conference on Maui and also served as the lead sponsor of the 2000 International Marine Debris Conference in Honolulu.

**FOR MORE INFORMATION EMAIL THE KIHAI FACILITIES PROJECT
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Revised by the [HIHWNMS web team](#) on March 19, 2004.

URL:

http://hawaiihumpbackwhale.noaa.gov/special_offerings/sp_off/kfp/KFP_background.html.